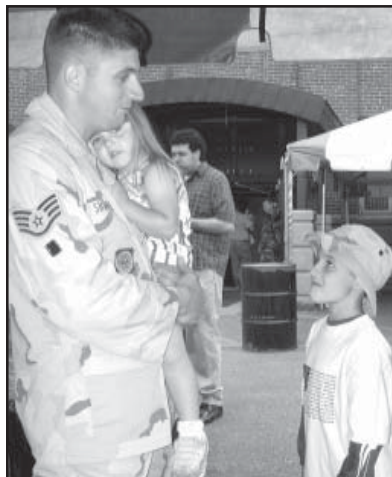


- ☑ New eagles in 439th AMXS (back page)
- ☑ Wing Honor Guard collects tattered flags (back page)
- ☑ National Flag Day, June 14 - display Old Glory proudly!

Back from Baghdad



--photo by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe



--photo by MSgt. Tom Allocco



--photo by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Twelve security specialists of the 439th Security Forces Squadron returned home to their families after two months in Baghdad on Wednesday. From left, Abigail Shameklis doesn't let go of her dad, SSgt. Brian Shameklis, as Cody Shameklis tries out dad's desert BDU hat. SrA. Christopher Beaulieu hugs son, Christopher, while his mother, Aecha looks on. "Daddy, Welcome Home," says the sign held by Sharon Stabile for husband, TSgt. Shane Stabile as he is greeted by son, Mason and daughter, Morgan.

Aircrews know it's a long way to AOR

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

Being on the front line of the Iraqi Freedom airlift is such serious business that if you didn't speak lightly about it you couldn't keep doing it day after day.

When a 337th Airlift Squadron aircrew talks about destinations, they're not going to the Iraqi Freedom AOR, they are going to the "beach", or the "sandbox" or the "big beach." If you are flying empty, you're carrying "sailboat fuel", when you are carrying cargo needed in the AOR, you're "hauling trash." "Crew dogs wearing bags" translates to crew members in flight suits. Sarcasm, humor and understatement will keep you going when you've been eating fast food, waiting for buses, sleeping sitting up and can't remember how many hours from Zulu you are in your current time zone.

"Where are you taking us today, sir," a Patriot Wing aircrew member asked his aircraft commander, Maj. Changkun Moon recently at Ramstein AB, Germany. "We're going to the garden spot," was the answer.

Like a good aircrew member, the aircraft commander stuffed a lot of meaning into an understatement. Understood between the two crew members was that when the bus arrived they would go out to the C-5 and kick off an around-the-clock workday, fly more than 2,500 miles across the Alps, the Mediterranean Sea and desert, land twice at

Iraqi Freedom AOR bases, study charts, worry about the weather, monitor fuel, engine and electric gauges, wrestle with maintenance problems, unload and load tons of cargo and then wait in the dark somewhere for another bus to take them to a barracks to try to get some sleep to be strong enough to do it all again. And that was only if everything went right.

There was nothing special about the recent seven-day mission of Moon and his augmented crew of 12 others. They were a cross section of all the 337th AS crews. It was one more mission in a series that started when a Westover crew flew emergency vehicles from California to New York City on Sept. 11, 2001 before Enduring Freedom had a name.

Moon wears an Enduring Freedom patch on his flight jacket. In the month before the mission he had flown down range four times. During one 20-day period he clocked 130 flying hours.

"It builds on you after a while," he said. Of the effect on his wife, daughter and son, he said, "on an airline they always know where you are...they know within a few

hours when you will be home. On stage missions they don't know when you are coming home."

"A good stick, good hands," is how MSgt. Paul Benson, loadmaster, expresses respect for the flying abilities of the aircraft commander.

"He takes care of his people...all our pilots are like that, right along with the crew. People in the squadron respect each other for their competence," he said. "And don't forget SMSgt. Karen Scott's admin section...the administrators work hard...they make sure everything's covered," Benson said.

Of the mission, he says, "it's long days, but we know people depend on us...so it's kind of rewarding at the same time...there's a lot of camaraderie."

The aircrew covers a range of experience. Benson came to Westover 29 years ago, flying C-123s. "It seems like yesterday." 2nd Lt. David Quinn came out of C-5 school in January.

After a year and a half of training to be

(continued on next page)



Loadmaster SrA. Jeffrey Gilbert shows the strain of a long workday.

Aircrews... (Cont. from front)

pilot, he is still impressed by the professionalism of the enlisted aircrew members. "These guys here know so much about the airplane, it's incredible how much they know," he said of air crew members who were flying Just Cause and Desert Storm missions while he was in high school in Plymouth.

Capt. Allyn Taylor flew UH-60 helicopters for eight years in the Army and HA 60s for four years in the Air Force. From 1998 to 2001 he flew Northern Watch search and rescue missions in Turkey. This is his first operational flight as a C-5 pilot. Like Quinn, he is awed by the magnitude of the new job. The flight engineers and the loadmasters have to know an amazing amount...the complexity is incredible. One of my goals at Altus was to know the engines like a flight engineer. I didn't realize how big a task that would be," Taylor said.

Learning never stops. MSgt. Tom Mellor is undergoing a periodic evaluation of the loadmaster skills he has practiced since 1986. SMSgt. Garth Parker peppers him with questions during upload, download, preflight, through flight, post flight. "Being an aircrew member is not the life of Riley," says Mellor.

Meanwhile, MSgt. Chris Maille, 19 years' service, shadows SrA. Jeff Gilbert, fresh out of C-5 school. "Latch the strap. Pop the strap. Start it over. All right that's good," he instructs as part of OJT.

Maille moves among the pallets, eyeing them expertly, with no wasted movement, spotting a broken lock, rechainning a load that is not delivered to the plane to his satisfaction.

On the flight deck, flight engineer SMSgt. Glenn Flynn checks and double checks the thrust in an engine. He checks the history of the engine and consults with SMSgt. Ken Gilbert. Maintenance is called to fix a problem with the autopilot.

Just before takeoff there is a drop in the noise level when the air conditioning is turned off. "Starting number one," Moon says, and presses a red button which opens

New eagles in maintenance squadron



Lt. Col. Daniel Allen, 439th AMXS commander, receives his colonel's eagles from his wife, Lesley, and Brig. Gen. Martin M. Mazick, 439th AW commander on June 4. The pin-on ceremony was held in Hangar 9.

--photo by
SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

a valve which starts the first engine. Capt. Gregg Southworth sits to his right. "Starting number two," Moon says and the rumble increases another level.

It's part of the rhythm of the workday. "It's long days. You don't know where your next meal is going to come from. It's a treat getting a chance to go to the commissary," said TSgt. Mark Schmitter. TSgt. Carlos

Correa recently spent 21 similar days in an Iraqi Freedom stage. "It's been almost two years we've been doing this. It's now almost normal. What would not be normal to others -- a 24 hour day -- is normal to us," says Correa.

Wing Honor Guard collects tattered flags

The Westover Honor Guard is accepting unserviceable American flags for a ceremonial Proper Retirement burning which will be held in September.

The surge of patriotism across our Nation has caused many flags to be displayed for long periods and they are consequently worn out and should be replaced. All Americans will honor the flag on National Flag Day, June 14, which was originally known as the Flag Birthday.

You may drop off your unserviceable flags in the clearly marked box at the Westover Honor Guard Building. For more information, call MSgt. Tom Roe at Ext. 3342.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003
6,968 passengers --- 2,344 aircraft
25,789,957 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

Meals
14,633 hot meals served
Box lunches: 4,958
Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb.1
15,966,488 gallons of JP-8
Info from Jim Maloney, Fuels

PATRIOT
express

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using last names of deploying reservists.)

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Express-ions

